REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Communication of April 6, 2005 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the three-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. Applicants have filed this response as a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in order to expedite prosecution and to ensure that the claim amendments made herein are considered.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 and 10-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to establish a linkage of the method steps with the underlying technology with which the steps are implemented. Specifically, applications have added the modifier "electronically" before the receiving, linking, and reporting steps. This amendment is fully supported by the specification, such as by page 9, lines 9-20 and by page 14, line 13 to page 15, lines 7. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request that the § 101 rejection to claims 1-4 and 10-19 be withdrawn in response to these amendments.

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,167,378 to Webber, Jr. (Webber). In paragraphs 4-5 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 and 10-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0013721 to Dabbiere, *et al.* (Dabbiere).

In response to the Office Action, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 2 to clarify various disclosed aspects of the invention. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that method steps are performed by a trading partner exchange, that the trading partner exchange assigns a unique identifier to a new transaction initiated by an order, the trading partner exchange associating the unique identifier with a plurality of system identifiers used by trading partner systems, data maintained by the trading partner exchange can be updated responsive to receiving transaction information from the trading partner systems that is identified by the system identifiers, and that the trading partner exchange can report updated data regarding the transaction via an integrated access interface. This amendment is supported by the claims as they existed before the current amendments, by page 8, lines 7-20, and by page 10, lines 13 to page 13, line 16.

Claims 2 and 4 have been amended to clarify that a trading partner exchange is used to handle order status information and that the trading partner exchange has an integrated access interface linked to a multi-layered access platform. The layers include an access layer, a display layer, and an analytical layer. Support for these amendments can be found between page 8, line 21 and page 10, line 6 and can be found within FIG. 1 and 2.

Other claims have been amended for consistency with the above amendments. No new matter has been added as a result of these amendments.

I. Overview of Applicants' Claimed invention

Applicants disclose and claim a method for creating an exposing order status within a supply chain of trading partners (such as a customer, retailer, distributor, shipper, and manufacture) having disparate computing systems. The disclosed method permits customers to contact a trading partner exchange through any one of a variety of available communication channels (phone, Web, email) to determine the status of a particular order.

More specifically, the trading partner exchange can represent an order as a transaction. The transaction can maintain a status for the order from the placing of an order until the time the product is delivered to a requesting customer. When the status of the order is changed within a computer system of a trading partner, the computer system can contact the trading partner exchange and update the order status contained in the trading partner exchange.

The trading partner exchange can maintain a link between the internally stored order and order status and a corresponding key field within each of the trading partner systems. This link can indicate the format in which the order status is to be presented to each trading partner and the format in which updates are received from each trading partner. When the status of the order is changed within a computer system of any of the trading partners, the computer system can contact the trading partner exchange and update the order status contained in the trading partner exchange. Additionally, each trading partner can contract the trading partner exchange to request an order status and

the trading partner exchange can respond to the request in an appropriate format for the requestor.

It should be further noted that it can be difficult to conventionally determine the status of an order when different ones of the trading partners use different, and often incompatible computing systems, as noted on page 4, lines 3-13. This complication is increased when different channels of communication (such as telephone, Web, etc.) are needed to determine order status for different ones of the trading partners, as noted on page 4, lines 3-13. Applicants' claimed and disclosed subject matter provides a solution to alleviate this problem.

II. Webber fails to explicitly or inherently teach each claimed limitation

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Webber.

Webber teaches a method and system for automating a transaction space based on a digital contract. The contract can reside at a central system and can be used to control the workflow for a transaction. Webber's method is based on tightly integrating the transaction space by forcing all participants to communicate through a common contract definition that is managed and controlled by the central authority. The contract puts stringent restrictions upon the participants as shown by computing module 262 and forces a significant amount of data to be stored in a central system.

Thus, the digital contract of Webber cannot be implemented by disparate trading partner systems without significant, expensive software modifications to each of the systems. Venders attempting to follow the teachings of Webber, may be just as well off utilizing a single, joint, monolithic system (which, from a business perspective, would be difficult to sell to the various trading partners) instead of their own, unique system, which has trouble communicating (which problem is solved by the Applicants' claimed and disclosed method).

Consequently, a fundamental difference between the Applicants' claimed and disclosed subject matter is the manner in which trading partners are integrated. Webber requires all trading partners to communicate through a common contract format managed by a central authority, which puts significant constraints upon the systems used by the trading partners. In contrast, Applicants teach a trading partner exchange that does not require each trading partner to adapt their system to the specific needs of a central authority. That is, Applicants provide a solution that adapts to the needs of the systems used by various trading partners, while Webber requires trading partners to adapt their systems to the needs of a central authority.

Referring to claim 1, Webber fails to teach that a trading partner exchange automatically assigns a unique transaction identifier responsive to receiving an order from a first trading partner. Webber fails to teach that a trading partner associates the transaction identifier with a plurality of trading partner system identifiers. Webber fails

to teach that a trading partner receives a status from a second trading partner associated with a second trading partner system identifier. Webber fails to teach that based upon the received status, a trading partner exchange updates data maintained for the transaction by the trading partner system exchange.

Referring to claim 2, Webber fails to teach the claimed access platform.

Because Webber fails to explicitly or inherently teach each claimed limitation of claim 1, the §102(b) rejections to claims 1-4 should be withdrawn, which action is respectfully requested.

II. Dabbiere fails to explicitly or implicitly teach each claimed limitation

Claims 1-4 and 10-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dabbiere.

Dabbiere teaches a supply chain management solution that uses a business community integration tool for providing supply chain partners with real-time access to inventory data. Dabbiere does include a system where trading partners are able to communicate with a supply chain location via an Internet communication link. Dabbiere also teaches (paragraph 0028) that partners can be granted access to product information, including order status.

The methodology, techniques, and advantages taught by Dabbiere, however, are dissimilar to the claimed invention. That is, the claimed invention provides a distinct

methodology for exposing order status to trading partners and for automatically updating an order status of an item throughout it's lifecycle. The claimed methodology is able to be utilized by various trading partners even though the computing systems used by these trading partners are incompatible with each other. Further, the claimed methodology operates across different communication channels.

Dabbiere, as noted by the Examiner, fails to disclose the use of an identifier. Without using a unique identifier, the order status cannot be tracked/updated from system to system (which can be otherwise incompatible systems) in the manner claimed. Dabbiere, however, has no need for such an identifier, as the trading partners are simply granted access to a supply chain system via a Web browser. Consequently, no motivation exists for one of ordinary skill in the art based upon Dabbiere and teachings contained therein to utilize identifiers in the fashion claimed.

Applicants assert their right under MPEP 2144.03(C) to challenge the Officially Noticed facts and to respectfully request that the Examiner support these facts with adequate Evidence.

Regardless of whether it is proper to Officially Notice the claimed identifier, Dabbiere still fails to explicitly or implicitly teach each claimed limitation. Dabbiere fails to teach that a trading partner exchange automatically assigns a unique transaction identifier responsive to receiving an order from a first trading partner. Dabbiere fails to teach that a trading partner associates the transaction identifier with a plurality of trading

partner system identifiers. Dabbiere fails to teach that a trading partner receives a status from a second trading partner associated with a second trading partner system identifier. Dabbiere fails to teach that based upon the received status, a trading partner exchange updates data maintained for the transaction by the trading partner system exchange.

Because Dabbiere fails to explicitly or inherently teach each claimed limitation of claim 1, the §103(a) rejections to claims 1-4 and 10-19 should be withdrawn, which action is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants believe that this Application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this response, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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